

Pittsburg State University
Department of Music

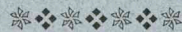
Faculty Recital

Kathryn Parke, soprano
Susan Marchant, harpsichord
with
Cora Cooper, baroque violin

Program

Hört, ihr Völker (BWV 76)
Eilt, ihr Stunden (BWV 30)

J. S. Bach
(1685-1750)



Qu'on ne me dise plus
Zephyre

François Couperin
(1668-1733)



Sonata in E Major for Violin and Harpsichord (BWV 1016)
Adagio
Allegro
Adagio ma non tanto
Allegro

J. S. Bach



from *The Fairy Queen*
Ye gentle spirits of the air
The Plaint (O let me weep)
Hark, the ech'ing air

Henry Purcell
(1658-1685)



Lungi dal vago volto
Recitative
Aria
Recitative
Aria

Antonio Vivaldi
(1678-1741)

Tuesday, February 18, 2003
7:30 p.m.
McCray Hall Lobby

We extend special thanks to Kenneth Beckmann for the loan of Dr. Cooper's violin.

Program Notes

Bach spent the end of his life in Leipzig, where, as Kantor of the Thomasschule, he provided the musical training for the students at the school. He also was the civic director of music, providing music for any municipal events worthy of note. In addition to his voluntarily directing the Collegium Musicum for much of his career there, his duties *also* included responsibility for the music at the city's four principal churches, of which the Thomaskirche and the Nikolaikirche were the most prominent (cantatas were presented in opposite weeks, but even so...!). Unfortunately, however, Leipzig was not a happy working environment for Bach, for he was a perfectionist who could be something of a stubborn and dictatorial curmudgeon if he felt his principles were being compromised, while the city fathers had little patience with his demands and felt less allegiance to the traditional rights of the Kantor. (In fact, incredible as it may seem to us in hindsight, Bach was not the first, or even the second, choice for this post as far as the city was concerned, and it was felt that they had had to settle for a mediocre applicant.) Cantata 76, *Die Himmel erzählen die Ehre Gottes*, was the second of his cantatas presented at Leipzig (in the Thomaskirche -- the Nikolaikirche had received Cantata 75 the week before), and thereupon took its place in the five enormous cycles of cantatas for the church year that Bach would compose for his new duties, for a total of around 300 cantatas (approximately 100 of which are no longer extant). *Hört, ihr Völker* has the character of a French overture, a regal exhortation that follows God's invitation to come to his feast of love. Cantata 30, *Freue dich, erlöste Schar*, is an almost literal parody of an earlier secular cantata, *Angenehmes Wiederau*. That cantata was written to honor J. C. Hennicke, newly made the feudal lord and judge of Wiederau in Saxony, and its text, with the four characters of Time, Good Fortune, the River Elster, and Fate (SATB, respectively), is typical of the obsequious flattery of the period. As its usefulness was severely limited by having so specific a text, but with music too good to lie idle, it later became, almost note for note, a cantata for the feast of St. John the Baptist. Time's original text is an admonishment that, no matter whatever else may happen, Hennicke's glory and good fortune must come first. The sacred text has an interesting reference to the "house of Kedar," who was Ishmael's second son (and therefore the grandson of Abraham by his firstborn son with Hagar, Sarah's maid). The tribes of Kedar were nomadic, and scorned as barbaric by the Jews, but the text affirms that, with God's presence, even the most forsaken places can become the Lord's meadows.

Hört, ihr Völker (*Die Himmel erzählen die Ehre Gottes*, BWV 76)

Hört, ihr Völker, Gottes Stimme,
eilt zu seinem Gnadenthron!
Aller Dinge Grund und Ende
ist sein eingeborner Sohn,
daß sich alles zu ihm wende.
Hört, ihr Völker, etc.

Hear, ye people, God's voice,
hurry to his throne of grace!
The foundation and conclusion of all things
is his only-begotten son,
so that everything turns itself toward him.

Eilt, ihr Stunden (*Freue dich, erlöste Schar*, BWV 30)

Eilt, ihr Stunden, kommt herbei,
bringt mich bald in jene Auen!
Ich will mit der heiligen Schar
meinem Gott ein' Dankaltar
in den Hütten Kedar bauen,
bis ich ewig dankbar sei.
Eilt, ihr Stunden, etc.

Hurry, ye hours, come hither,
bring me soon into those pastures!
With the holy host, I will
build my God an altar of thanks
in the houses of Kedar,
until I am eternally grateful.



François Couperin (known as *le Grand*, firstly to distinguish him from his uncle, and secondly out of respect for his stature and talents) is primarily known as an instrumental composer. In his trio sonatas, he made a conscious attempt to marry the more reserved French tastes (*bon goût*) with Italian theatricality. This synthesis is less obvious in his vocal music, however, particularly the secular music, which is distinctly French. He did not leave us a great deal of vocal music, and most of what remains is sacred. Certainly the pinnacle of the sacred pieces

are the three exquisite *Leçons de ténèbres* for Maundy Thursday, two of which are for solo soprano, while the third is a soprano duet. Six other *leçons* were written (three each for Good Friday and Holy Saturday), but for some reason they were never published and have since been lost, which is a bitter pill indeed for those of us who love this music. If the sacred works are not particularly well known, however, Couperin's secular music is positively obscure. The little we have is primarily found in Ballard's *Recueils d'airs sérieux et à boire* and are for one or more voices, and several of them also appear as harpsichord pieces. Indeed, it was typical that *airs de cour*, *airs sérieux*, and *brunettes* would appear as instrumental pieces -- the flute repertoire in particular is full of little gems by composers like Hotteterre and Boismortier that are arrangements of these songs. Couperin's *Qu'on ne me dise plus* must have been popular with violinists, for example, as there are bowing marks in the vocal line. It is an *air sérieux* (or *serious song*, as opposed to the lighter *air à boire*, or *drinking song*). A plaintive lament over the unresponsive Iris, it is a subtle sarabande, with interesting cross-relationships in the bass line. *Zephyre, modere en ces lieux* is a *brunette*, a sort of sub-species of the *air* that was named for its style of poetry, which was pastoral in nature and dealt with lovelorn shepherds and the shepherdesses they fruitlessly adored. The name comes from the refrain of *Le beau berger Tircis*, "*Ah! petite Brunette! Ah, tu me fais mourir*" ("*Ah, little brunette, you make me die*"), and many of the pieces did mention brunettes at some point in the text. *Zephyre, modere en ces lieux*, however, concerns itself instead with the suitor's determination to make even the creatures of myth subservient to his idol, as Zephyr, the God of the Winds, is ordered not to frolic with Flora, the Goddess of Flowers, while nymphs, fauns, water sprites, and the birds of the air reverently attend her slumber. The verses, or *couplets*, are really more in the nature of an instrumental *double*, as the increasingly florid ornamentation becomes rather more like a composed variation than a simple repetition.

Air sérieux

Qu'on ne me dise plus que c'est la seule absence
 Qui peut guerir nos coeurs de l'amoureux poison;
 J'aime Iris en secret, j'évite sa presence,
 Ce remede cruel accable ma raison,
 Absente je la vois, à tous momens j'y pense,
 Et cherchant à guerir je fuis ma guerison.

Let no one say to me anymore that it is only absence
 that can cure our hearts of amorous poison;
 I love Iris in secret, I avoid her presence,
 this cruel remedy crushes my reason,
 absent, I see her; at all moments I think of her,
 and seeking for a cure, I flee my recovery.

Brunete

Zephyre, modere en ces lieux
 L'ardeur dont tu caresses Flore:
 Le sommeil a fermé les yeux
 De l'inhumaine que j'adore.

Zeyphr, moderate in these places
 the ardor with which you caress Flora:
 Sleep has closed the eyes
 of the inhumane one that I adore.

Et vous, qui baignez de vos flots
 Les bords de son lit de verdure,
 Ruisseaux, respectez son repos;
 Coulez un moment sans murmure.

And you, who bathe with waves
 the banks of her verdant bed,
 Streams, respect her repose;
 flow for a moment without murmuring.

N'interrompez point son sommeil,
 Oiseaux, dont la voix est si tendre:
 Que ce ne soit qu'à son reveil,
 Que vos chants se fassent entendre.

Do not interrupt her sleep,
 Ye birds, whose voice is so tender:
 so that it is only at her awakening
 that your songs make themselves heard.

Voyez les Faunes de ces lieux
 Et les Nymphes de ces bocages,
 Attendant qu'elle ouvre les yeux,
 Se reposer sous ces ombrages.

See the Fauns of these places
 and the Nymphs of these groves,
 waiting for her to open her eyes,
 they repose themselves in the shade.

Voyez les Déesses des eaux
 Veiller tandis qu'elle sommeille:
 Mais, Nymphes, Faunes, Oyseaux,
 Nymphes, Chantez: Elle s'éveille.

See the Gods of the waters
 wakeful while she sleeps:
 But, Naiads, Fauns, Birds,
 Nymphs, sing: she awakes.



Bach's six sonatas for violin and obligato harpsichord date from his time in Cöthen, and were written between 1717 and 1723. Cöthen, of course, was one of the happier periods in Bach's life, for he was greatly valued by Prince Leopold, who was himself a passionate lover of music and an accomplished amateur musician. In fact, Bach's salary was virtually the highest of any of the court's retainers, and at 400 *thalers* was twice that of his predecessor, while in 1718 Leopold himself stood as godfather to Bach's last child by his first wife, Maria Barbara. The *E Major Sonata for violin and harpsichord*, BWV 1016, is probably one of Bach's most popular and easily recognized pieces, the jaunty cheerfulness and toe-tapping spontaneity of its fast movements having made it a great favorite of audiences everywhere.



Cromwell and his Puritan government had done their best to obliterate any possible frivolity or extravagance which might be displeasing to God, not only in the theaters but also in every other aspect of life, so the return of Charles II, who was nothing if not frivolous and extravagant (one of his mistresses, the actress Nell Gwyn, became a popular heroine of sorts, standing considerably higher in the public's affections than did his long-suffering queen), allowed years of pent-up gaiety to burst forth. However, because of the moratorium the Roundheads had imposed after winning the Civil War, English "opera" did not evolve the way Continental opera did. The Italians and the French sang not only the arias, but the recitatives as well, but the English taste was for a sort of "semi-opera," which John Dryden defined as "a poetical tale, or fiction, represented by vocal or instrumental music, adorned with scenes, machines, and dancing," in which musical scenes were joined by spoken dialogue. Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* is the only early English opera in which everything is sung; most of his semi-operas, such as *The Fairy Queen*, fit the above description to a T. Another characteristic of Restoration playwrights is that they couldn't leave anything alone, and even Shakespeare was not safe from pageant-mad vandals.

The Fairy Queen is an adaptation of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and it certainly was lavishly adorned with scenes, machines, and dancing, including sudden materializations of sumptuous, exotic locales, an appearance by the Sun God, Phoebus, and the arrival of Juno in a heavenly chariot drawn by peacocks. The anonymous adapter (many names have been put forward as possibilities, including the poets Elkanah Settle or John Dryden, the actor Thomas Betterton, or even Purcell himself) has focused his attention on the fairy court and the marital strife between Titania and Oberon, while significantly minimizing the mortals' interaction. Purcell's contribution to the opera is four large masques inserted into Acts II - V in the first production, which was presented in 1692, with an additional masque for Act I and a few new songs for the 1693 revision, as well as an overture and entr'acte music. It was an enormously popular but expensive production: pronounced superior to *Dioclesian* and *King Arthur*, two other operas for which Purcell supplied the music, "the Court and Town were wonderfully satisfy'd with it; but the Expences in setting it out being so great, the Company got very little by it." A sky filled with peacocks' tails evidently did not come cheap.

The star-crossed pairs of lovers (Lysander and Hermia, Demetrius and Helena) remain, but get very short shrift, especially in the 1693 version when the masque spoofing a drunken poet harassed by fairy tormentors was added to the first act. The major plot point is Oberon's anger at Titania's infatuation with her Indian boy, whom she refuses to give up. She and her court retire to a forest glade, where she hides the boy from Oberon. In the second act, Titania turns the glade to "*Fairy-Land*," with grottos, arbores, and exotic flowers, but as she drifts into slumber, Oberon seizes the opportunity to squeeze a love potion into her eyes. Puck meanwhile places the ass's head on Bottom in time for Titania, under the influence of the potion, to fall madly in love with him. She calls for music "to entertain my love," and the scene changes to an enchanted lake, and various fauns, dryads, and fairies dance for the lovers' enjoyment, only to be frightened away by a troop of Green Men. The song *Ye gentle spirits of the air* is one of the pieces added to the 1693 production, an invocation which stills the alarm caused by the savages, and Titania leads Bottom away to bed. In the fourth act, Oberon frees Titania from her ludicrous infatuation, and the reconciliation of the Fairy King and Queen is celebrated with a masque to honor Oberon's birthday, where the scene is magically changed to a garden of fountains honored by the presence of Phoebus himself. Puck now applies the love potion to Demetrius, so that, upon waking, the mortals are finally happily paired off. They are discovered by

Theseus, the Duke of Athens, at the opening of the fifth act, but when they tell him of their enchanted night in the woods, he denounces their stories as "Antick Fables." Oberon will not tolerate such a slight, and the entire fairy court appears to the astonished mortals to dazzle them with wonders. Juno descends from heaven to bless the lovers, after which Oberon requests "the Plaint that did so Nobly move, when *Laura* Mourn'd for her departed Love," another insertion into the 1693 production. (And one which seems even more out of place than some of the other more incongruous moments, leading to speculation that perhaps it was already a popular song in its own right and added at the request of a particular performer. No matter -- built upon one of Purcell's trademark ground basses, it is a stunning piece and well worthy of such attention.) Finally, Oberon calls for a "new Transparent World" for Titania's delight, and the scene changes to an opulent Chinese garden. (There is nothing remotely Chinese about it, of course, but the more exotic, the better.) Chinese men and women sing of their heavenly bliss, while monkeys come down from the trees and dance, and nature and the very air join in the revelry in the famous coloratura showpiece, *Hark! the Ech'ing Air a Triumph Sings*. Hymen, the god of marriage, enters to bless the lovers, and a Chinese man and woman lead the dancers in an elegant Chaconne to close the opera.

Ye Gentle Spirits

Ye Gentle Spirits of the Air, appear;
 Prepare, and joyn your tender Voices here.
 Catch, and repeat the Trembling Sounds anew,
 Run new Divisions, and such Measures keep,
 As when you lull the God of Love asleep.
 Ye Gentle Spirits, *etc.*

The Plaint

O Let me for ever, ever weep,
 My Eyes no more shall welcome Sleep;
 I'll hide me from the sight of Day,
 And sigh, and sigh my Soul away.
 He's gone, he's gone, his loss deplore;
 For I shall never see him more.

Hark! the Ech'ing Air

Hark! the Ech'ing Air a Triumph Sings,
 And all around pleas'd *Cupids* clap their Wings.



The "Red Priest" is sometimes overlooked or rather carelessly dismissed when considering the very greatest composers of the Baroque era, possibly due in part to the sheer volume of music he produced, and possibly because of the over-familiarity of a few of his pieces, such as *The Four Seasons*, which is surely one of the most universally recognizable pieces of "serious" music (as anyone knows who has ever eaten in a restaurant not specializing in fast food). While it is true that Vivaldi does not always achieve the harmonic interest of Bach (an impossible task!), it must be remembered that Bach thought so highly of Vivaldi's concerti that he arranged many of them for the organ (and admittedly dressed them up a trifle in the process). It seems reasonable to assume that *Lungi dal vago volto* dates from Vivaldi's tenure at the Ospedale della Pietà, one of Venice's charitable institutions for poor, orphaned, or illegitimate girls. These girls received the very best instrumental and vocal training, and their recitals were famous throughout Europe -- their festival services were so popular among the nobility, in fact, that the stuffier church fathers worried that the religious aspects might be swallowed up in the entertainment value. Vivaldi served as maestro there for nearly forty years, coming to the Conservatorio the year after he joined the priesthood in 1703, and his good fortune in having these extraordinarily accomplished girls to challenge his compositional skills led to some of his most delightful, as well as technically demanding, pieces. The position also allowed him ample freedom to travel, despite his constant but nebulous chest ailment and ill health, which gave him opportunities to explore and keep abreast of the newest musical trends. He is best remembered, of course, for his instrumental music, and in

particular for his concerti; however, his vocal music is quite lovely and deserves to be heard more often. Certainly his recitatives, often written with a harmonic unpredictability that results in a line which is not particularly idiomatic, achieve a certain spice thereby, as is amply demonstrated in the opening recitative of *Lungi dal vago volto*. Its slow aria, filled with tender birdcalls, is hauntingly lovely, while the final aria is a delightful, buoyant romp.

Lungi dal vago volto

Recitative

Lungi dal vago volto della mia bella Elvira
viver non posso. Oh Dio!
e pur crudo destin per mio tormento
or mi condanna à pascolar l'armento,
mà qual da lungi ammira non distinta beltade
il guardo mio Pastorella che viene?
Temo d'errar, mi perdo, corro,
iv' fermo, rido, e sospiro
ad un ardo, gelo, contento, e tormentato:
mi sembra alla divisa
non mi par al semblante,
deh per pietade amor, amico cielo,
sciogli dal mio bel sol la nube il velo.

Far from the lovely face of my beautiful Elvira,
I cannot live. Oh God!
and yet cruel destiny, for my torment
now condemns me to pasture the flock,
but must I admire indistinctly from afar that beauty,
my shepherdess who comes into my sight?
Afraid of being mistaken, I am lost, I run,
then stop, laugh, and sigh
at the same time I burn and freeze, contented and tormented:
it seems to me to be her dress
but it doesn't seem to be her face;
ah, out of pity for love, friendly skies,
release my beautiful sun from its veil of clouds.

Aria

Augelletti voi col canto
Questi selve impretiosite,
Ed io posso sol col piante
Consolare il mio dolor.
Fate voi che dolce incanto
Con amor ò con pietade e
Chiami al bosco il mio tesor.
Augelletti, etc.

Little birds, you with your song
adorn these woods,
and I am able only with tears
to console my grief.
Bring about that sweet enchantment
with love or with pity,
and call my treasure to the forest.

Recitative

Allegrezza mio core
ch'al fin giunse alla meta
l'avida mia pupilla
ti riconosco ò bella
ti reveggio mio bene
l'abbraccio Pastorella.
Perdona ò cara à miei sospesi affetti
perche errante Pastor veder non suole
tra queste ombrose frondi aperto il sole.

Be joyful, my heart,
that at last reaches the goal
of my avid eyes;
I recognize you, oh beautiful one,
I see you again, my dear one,
I embrace my shepherdess.
Pardon, o dearest, my uncertain affections,
because the blundering shepherd is not used to seeing
open air and sunlight amid these shady branches.

Aria

Mi stringerai, sì, sì,
Non partirai più nò.
Bella ti rapiro
Se il cor non cede.
Avvinto al tuo bel sen
Ti giuro amato ben
Che mai ti mancherò
D'amor, e fede.
Mi stringerai, etc.

You will bind yourself to me, yes, yes,
you will never leave again, no.
Beautiful one, I will kidnap you
if your heart does not yield.
Bound to your beautiful bosom
I swear to you, my beloved,
that I will never fail you
in love and faithfulness.